



## DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES  
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL: 5-233191

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1981

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SOCIAL SERVICES IMPRESSIVE

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AND CAN NOT OPERATE BY ALLOCATING FIXED PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE FOR ITS VARIOUS SERVICES, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, THE HON E.P. HO, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR HO SAID THE BUDGET EACH YEAR IS CONSTRUCTED ON THE FUNDS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN ON-GOING AND APPROVED NEW SERVICES AND THE EXPANSION OF SERVICES IS BASED ON PROGRAMME PLANS WHICH ARE REVIEWED REGULARLY.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES - EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE, MEDICAL AND HEALTH - WAS IMPRESSIVE AND THERE WERE NO SERIOUS COMPLAINTS ABOUT THESE GENERAL PLANS.

ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HONG KONG STUDENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, MR HO SAID THE LONGER TERM LOAN SCHEME SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ENSURE THAT FIRST DEGREE AND HIGHER DIPLOMA STUDENTS FROM HONG KONG WISHING TO STUDY IN THE UK WOULD NOT BE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO MERELY BECAUSE OF THE DISPARITY BETWEEN +HOME+ AND +OVERSEAS+ TUITION FEES.

WHILE HONG KONG VALUED THE ACADEMIC LINKS WITH THE UK, IT WAS ALSO REVIEWING THE PROVISION OF ITS OWN HIGHER EDUCATION PLACES, AND THIS MATTER WAS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW POST-SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR KENNETH TOPLEY, HE SAID.

HE AGREED WITH THE HON ALEX WU, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SENSIBLE FROM THE EDUCATIONAL POINT OF VIEW FOR HONG KONG TO ATTEMPT TO BE SELF SUFFICIENT IN ALL DISCIPLINES. MR HO ALSO GAVE ASSURANCE THAT ADEQUATE FUNDS WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

ON THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING RAISED BY THE REV THE HON JOYCE BENNETT, MR HO SAID THERE WAS AN ON-GOING PROGRAMME OF IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING METHODS IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

A SYLLABUS FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS HAD BEEN PREPARED FROM THE THREE-YEAR WORK OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADVISER, AND WOULD SHORTLY BE ISSUED TO SCHOOLS FOR COMMENT.

WITH REGARD TO TEXTBOOKS FOR THE TEACHING OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH, HE SAID CERTAIN MEASURES TAKEN TO KEEP A CHECK ON THESE BOOKS HAD RESULTED IN MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL'S SALARY, MR HO SAID THE REPORT NO. 5 OF THE STANDING COMMISSION HAD RECOMMENDED, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD ACCEPTED SALARY ARRANGEMENT THAT HARMED NONE AND SUBSTANTIALLY BENEFITED MANY. HE STRESSED THAT THE STANDING COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS WERE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PAY SCALES OF THE ASSISTANT EDUCATION OFFICER AND EDUCATION OFFICER RANKS AND NOT A REDUCTION IN THE PAY SCALE OF THE SENIOR MASTER RANK.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THE MERGER OF THE TWO RANKS OF EDUCATION OFFICER AND SENIOR MASTER RANKS DID NOT MEAN THAT THERE SHOULD NO LONGER BE VICE-PRINCIPALS- IT SIMPLY MEANT THAT THE PERSON SELECTED BY A SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (AND THIS INCLUDED THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION IN CASE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS) TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL WAS REMUNERATED UNDER THE MERGED EDUCATION OFFICER/ SENIOR MASTER SCALE.

ON THE QUESTION OF A RELAXATION OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DISABILITY ALLOWANCE, RAISED BY THE HON WONG LAM AND DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI, HE SAID THAT SINCE APRIL 1980, A DISABILITY SUPPLEMENT HAD BEEN PAYABLE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WHO WERE PARTIALLY DISABLED WITH 50 PER CENT OR MORE LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY OR A BROADLY COMPARABLE DISABLEMENT AND WHO WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE EXTRA DIFFICULTIES AND NEEDS ARISING FROM SUCH DISABILITY.

DEALING WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING, MR HO SAID THAT SPECIAL STUDIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND OF NEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO LINK UP WITH THE NEEDS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY WERE BEING CARRIED OUT BY EXPERTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY WOULD BE AVAILABLE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

ON VOCATIONAL PLACES, HE SAID THE PLAN PROVIDES FOR THE EXPANSION OF PLACES FROM THE PRESENT 714 TO 1 600 BY 1984-5, WITH PROVISION FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED THEREIN RISING FROM 528 TO 900 PLACES.

WITH REGARD TO RESIDENTIAL PLACES FOR THE AGED, HE SAID THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD SEE A RAPID GROWTH IN THIS SERVICE.

BY 1984-85 IT WAS PLANNED TO PROVIDE OVER 2 000 ADDITIONAL PLACES IN HOSTELS AND HOMES FOR OLD PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. A FURTHER 875 PLACES WOULD BE PROVIDED IN PURPOSE-BUILT HOMES OUTSIDE PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES. SIXTEEN HOMES WITH CARE AND ATTENTION FACILITIES PLANNED TO OPEN DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD HAVE COMBINED FACILITIES.

+ALTOGETHER AN ADDITIONAL 2 135 CARE AND ATTENTION PLACES WILL BE PROVIDED BY 1983-84 WHICH SHOULD THEN MEET THE PRESENT PLANNING TARGET OF 4 PLACES PER 1 000 POPULATION OVER THE AGE OF 60.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS IN PROBATION AND OTHER SERVICES FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS, AND SUBJECT TO SUFFICIENT STAFF BEING AVAILABLE, THE AIM IS TO REDUCE THE CASELOADS OF PROBATION OFFICERS - ESPECIALLY THOSE DEALING WITH HIGH COURT CASES.

IN THE RELATED AREA OF TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS, AN OVERSEAS ADVISER HAS RECENTLY REVIEWED ALL ASPECTS OF THE OPERATION AND ORGANISATION OF THE FIVE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS OPERATED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

/HIS PRELIMINARY .....

HIS PRELIMINARY REPORT HAD OUTLINED SOME CONSTRUCTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE APPROACHES TO BE ADOPTED IN INSTITUTIONAL CORRECTIONAL WORK AND ON THE INTERNAL ORGANISATION, STRUCTURE AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS OF OUR CORRECTIONAL HOMES. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE BEING STUDIED WITHIN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

ON SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS, HE SAID THE RELATIVE SUMS OF MONEY INVOLVED SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE REAL INCREASES IN PROVISION FOR SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES BOTH BY THE DEPARTMENT AND, MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES THROUGH WHOM AN EVER INCREASING SHARE OF THE FUNDS EARMARKED FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES ARE BEING CHANNELLED.

DEALING WITH THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL WORK TRAINING FUNDS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE PLANNING AND FINANCING OF UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC EDUCATION, INCLUDING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION, WAS BEST PROVIDED FOR THROUGH THE TRIENNUM BLOCK GRANTS TO THE UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE.

THE TOPLEY COMMITTEE WAS NOW REVIEWING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AND PROVISION OF POST-SECONDARY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND WOULD BE ADVISING ON STUDENT TARGET NUMBERS FOR THE DECADE BEGINNING 1984.

HE HAD APPOINTED A WORKING PARTY UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF HIS DEPUTY, WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOTH GOVERNMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR, TO REVIEW THE PRESENT UTILISATION OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS, TO REFINE THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND FIGURES, AND TO ADVISE ON WAYS AND MEANS OF MEETING THE ESTIMATED SHORTFALL IN MANPOWER, MR HO SAID.

ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A NON-MEANS TESTED UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE, HE SAID A CURSORY EXAMINATION DISCLOSED THAT THIS PROPOSAL BROUGHT FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS. WHILE ASSISTANCE FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED AND THE ELDERLY COULD BE EASILY DETERMINED, IT WAS NOT THE CASE WITH UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE.

+WE WOULD NEED AN ARMY TO CHECK ON EACH CASE, AND THIS WOULD DESTROY THE SIMPLICITY OF DR HO'S PROPOSAL,+ HE SAID .

THE ABSENCE OF THESE SAFEGUARDS WOULD MEAN THAT THIS IS AN ALLOWANCE AVAILABLE ON DEMAND. APART FROM THE LARGE COMMITMENT THIS COULD INVOLVE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT COULD UNDERMINE THE BASIC PROVISIONS OF THE PA SCHEME AS WELL AS THE WORK ETHOS OF OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY.

THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME WAS ALSO APPLICABLE TO THE ABLE-BODIED UNEMPLOYED. THE SAVINGS LIMIT OF \$4 500 FOR A SINGLETON AND \$3 000 FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER MEANS THAT NO PERSON NEEDS TO EXHAUST HIS SAVINGS BEFORE HE BECOMES ELIGIBLE FOR HELP.

HE THEREFORE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT WAS RIGHT, NOR DID HE FEEL THAT THERE WAS PUBLIC SUPPORT, FOR THE UNEMPLOYED TO BE GIVEN A FLAT RATE NON-CONTRIBUTORY ALLOWANCE WITHOUT REGARD TO HIS MEANS OR THE RESOURCES OF HIS FAMILY MEMBERS.

MR HO FELT PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO IMPROVE THE PA SCHEME TO MAKE SURE THAT THOSE DEPENDENT ON IT WOULD BE ABLE TO BUY A BASKET OF GOODS AND SERVICES APPROPRIATE TO TODAY'S HONG KONG.

+THIS LATTER MATTER IS PRESENTLY RECEIVING THE GOVERNMENT'S CAREFUL CONSIDERATION,+ HE ADDED.

STUDY ON HOW TO IMPROVE SQUATTER CONDITIONS

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A PILOT STUDY IS NOW BEING CONDUCTED IN A SELECTED SQUATTER AREA TO SEE HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE TO UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME, THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, THE HON DENIS BRAY TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THIS WOULD INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF IMPROVED FACILITIES SUCH AS METERED WATER SUPPLY, CLEANSING AND DRAINAGE, IMPROVED PATHS AND PUBLIC LIGHTING.

MR BRAY WAS REPLYING TO REMARKS AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS FROM THE HON R.H. LOBO AND THE HON F.K. HU.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LATEST ESTIMATE OF SQUATTER POPULATION IS THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION PEOPLE.

+RATHER MORE THAN HALF OF THEM OR ABOUT 400 000 - 450 000 ARE LIVING IN SQUATTER AREAS WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE A LIFE OF AT LEAST THREE YEARS, BUT PROBABLY FIVE OR EVEN TEN MORE YEARS,+ HE SAID.

MR BRAY NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT PART OF HOUSING POLICY TO DEPRIVE OCCUPANTS OF SQUATTER HUTS OF PROPER PUBLIC HOUSING, BUT ADDED THAT +THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING ARE SO ENORMOUS THAT THEY CANNOT BE SATISFIED FOR SOME YEARS.+

HE SAID THE FACT THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE LIVED IN SQUATTER AREAS FOR A LONG TIME PROBABLY ARISES FROM THEIR OWN PERSONAL CHOICE OR PERHAPS IGNORANCE.

+ANY FAMILY WHICH SATISFIES THE INCOME CRITERIA FOR PUBLIC HOUSING SHOULD NOT BY NOW HAVE BEEN LIVING IN A SQUATTER AREA FOR MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS.

+HAD THEY APPLIED FOR PUBLIC HOUSING BEFORE 1974 THEY WOULD BY NOW HAVE BEEN OFFERED PUBLIC HOUSING. YET MANY SQUATTERS HAVE LIVED IN THESE AREAS FOR A LONG TIME AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.+

+IF WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PEOPLE WILL LIVE IN THESE PLACES FOR YEARS WE MUST MAKE SOME ALLOWANCES,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID DISTRICT AND CITY DISTRICT OFFICERS WOULD ALSO CONTINUE TO INSTITUTE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES IN VARIOUS SQUATTER AREAS ON A DISTRICT SCALE UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES.

+WHEN WE HAVE COMPLETED PROPOSALS FOR RENOVATION OF THESE SQUATTER AREAS WE SHALL PROBABLY NEED THE HELP OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT THEM,+ HE ADDED.

REFERRING TO THE REMARK ON UNEVEN PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, MR BRAY DISAGREED THAT +ALL GOOD THINGS ARE CONCENTRATED IN CENTRAL AREAS.+

+CHAI WAN IS FOR INSTANCE MUCH BETTER ENDOWED THAN SHAU KEI WAN,+ MR BRAY SAID.

/+IT IS .....

+IT IS PRECISELY THIS UNEVENNESS OF THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES - AND NOT ONLY IN RECREATION - THAT HAS LED TO THE NEW EMPHASIS ON DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION,+ HE SAID.

MR BRAY ALSO TOLD THE COUNCIL THAT A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-TERM PLAN FOR THE PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL SERVICES WAS BEING DRAWN UP.

+IN THE MEANTIME WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE MORE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH A MUCH MORE ROUGH AND READY WORKING PLAN IN THE FORM OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR LEISURE WHICH WE ALREADY HAVE.

+THIS PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK ON WHICH CURRENT PLANS FOR THE PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ARE BASED.+

MR BRAY ALSO LISTED THE WORK BEING DONE CONCERNING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN VARIOUS PLACES :

- \* ON THE NEW TERRITORIES THERE HAVE BEEN RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND PROPOSALS ARE NOW BEING PUT FORWARD TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY ADVANCING THE TIMING IN THE PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME=
- \* ON MORE SPACE IN THE URBAN AREAS AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP HAS RECENTLY CONCLUDED A SURVEY OF THE SPACE UNDERNEATH FLYOVERS - THERE ARE DOZENS OF THEM AND SOME QUITE SPACIOUS PLACES TO BE FOUND. PROPOSALS FOR A NUMBER OF THESE TO BE PUT TO RECREATIONAL USE ARE NOW COMING FORWARD=
- \* ON HOUSING ESTATES THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING IS AT THE MOMENT LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES=
- \* THREE AVENUES FOR ENCOURAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WERE PROPOSED. SEVERAL SCHEMES ARE UNDER EXAMINATION, AND IN SOME CASES DEVELOPERS HAVE NOT WAITED FOR ANY INITIATIVE FROM US. I AGREE THAT MORE CAN BE DONE HERE. MUCH IS DONE TO PROVIDE FREE OR CHEAP RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AT PUBLIC EXPENSE BUT WITH INCREASING AFFLUENCE WE MUST MAKE IT EASIER FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO PAY FOR THEIR OWN RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO DO SO= AND
- \* ON THE PROMOTION OF WATER SPORTS, I AGREE THAT THERE IS MORE SPARE WATER THAN SPARE LAND BUT WATERSIDE LAND WHICH IS REQUIRED IS SCARCE. SEVERAL SCHEMES ARE BEING DEVELOPED.

HOWEVER, MR BRAY SAID THERE WERE NO PLANS AT PRESENT TO PROVIDE A SPECIALIST COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION. THE CURRENT OUTPUT OF THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION, AUGMENTED BY THE EXISTING UNIVERSITY EXTRA-MURAL COURSES ARE CONSIDERED SUFFICIENT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

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### BETTER MATERNITY BENEFITS

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PAID MATERNITY LEAVE WILL APPLY TO THREE SURVIVING CHILDREN AND NOT TWO AS RECOMMENDED BY THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP SET UP TO EXAMINE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MATERNITY BENEFITS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE ADDED THAT THE INCLUSION OF A LIMIT IN THE LEGISLATION AROSE FROM THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE WORKING GROUP THAT THERE SHOULD NOT BE AN +OPEN-ENDED COMMITMENT+ FOR THE PAID LEAVE AND THE NEED TO LIMIT EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY NOT FROM CONSIDERATIONS OF POPULATION.

HE STRESSED THAT THE EXISTING MATERNITY PROTECTION PROVISIONS TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF MOTHERS-TO-BE WHO ARE WORKING APPLIED WITHOUT ANY LIMITATION AS TO NUMBERS OF CONFINEMENTS OR SURVIVING CHILDREN.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) BILL 1981 WHICH PROVIDES FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE, MR HENDERSON SAID THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF ADOPTING A SYSTEM OF PAID MATERNITY LEAVE WAS UNIVERSALLY SUPPORTED NOTWITHSTANDING DIFFERENCES ON THE EXTENT, AMOUNT, CONDITIONS, AND LIMITATION ON MATERNITY PAY ITSELF.

ON THE WHOLE, THE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE WELL RECEIVED BY ALL THESE UNIONS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO WERE CONSULTED AS WELL AS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, HE ADDED.

AFTER CONSULTING THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARIETY OF VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, EMPLOYEES' TRADE UNIONS, MAJOR EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, HE PROPOSED TO AMEND THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE.

MR HENDERSON WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS PROPOSED THAT ANY WOMAN EMPLOYEE COVERED BY THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE - THAT IS ALL WOMEN MANUAL EMPLOYEES AND ALL THOSE WOMEN NON-MANUAL EMPLOYEES EARNING UP TO \$6 000 A MONTH - SHOULD BE PAID WHILE ON MATERNITY LEAVE AT THE RATE OF NOT LESS THAN TWO-THIRDS OF HER PREVIOUS WAGES.

PAID MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THREE +SURVIVING CHILDREN+- AND TO VERIFY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN SHE HAS AT THE TIME SHE APPLIES FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE, A WOMAN EMPLOYEE SHOULD PRODUCE A STATUTORY DECLARATION TO HER EMPLOYER.

THE QUALIFYING SERVICE FOR PAID MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD BE 40 WEEKS OF CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF MATERNITY LEAVE.

A WOMAN EMPLOYEE WHO, WITHOUT THE PRIOR PERMISSION OF HER EMPLOYER, WORKS FOR ANOTHER EMPLOYER WHILE SHE IS ON PAID MATERNITY LEAVE SHOULD NOT BE ENTITLED TO MATERNITY ALLOWANCE.

/LEAVE TAKEN .....

LEAVE TAKEN IN CONNECTION WITH MISCARRIAGES SHOULD BE TREATED AS SICK LEAVE RATHER THAN MATERNITY LEAVE- AND DAYS OFF FOR PREGNANCY CHECK-UPS OR POST CONFINEMENT MEDICAL TREATMENT SHOULD ALSO BE REGARDED AS SICK LEAVE.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF A WOMAN EMPLOYEE IN CONNECTION WITH MATERNITY SHOULD BE MADE AN OFFENCE AND IF CONVICTED AN EMPLOYER SHOULD BE LIABLE TO A FINE OF \$5 000.

IN ADDITION, A WOMAN EMPLOYEE SHOULD BE PAID FULL MATERNITY BENEFITS FOR THE WHOLE OF HER PAID MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD IF SHE IS DISMISSED BEFORE THE EXPIRY OF THE LEAVE.

IN ORDER TO GIVE EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES SUFFICIENT TIME TO MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS TO COMPLY WITH THESE CHANGES IN THE LAW, MR HENDERSON PROPOSED THAT THE PAID MATERNITY LEAVE LEGISLATION SHOULD COME INTO OPERATION ON JUNE 1 THIS YEAR BY NOTIFICATION IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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#### INDUSTRIAL SAFETY FINES INCREASED

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) APPROVED FIVE SETS OF AMENDMENT INDUSTRIAL SAFETY REGULATIONS WHICH PROVIDE FOR INCREASED MAXIMUM FINES RANGING FROM \$5 000 TO \$50 000.

THEY ARE THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1981, THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (CONFINED SPACES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1981, THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (LIFTING APPLIANCES AND LIFTING GEAR) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1981, THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (GUARDING AND OPERATION OF MACHINERY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1981, AND THE CONSTRUCTION SITES (SAFETY) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1981.

IN SEEKING APPROVAL OF THE REGULATIONS, THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, THE HON J.N. HENDERSON, RECALLED THAT LAST AUGUST THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS (AMENDMENT)(NO. 2) ORDINANCE 1980 WHICH RAISED THE MAXIMUM PENALTY THAT MAY BE PROVIDED IN ANY REGULATIONS MADE UNDER IT TO \$50 000.

+WHEN I INTRODUCED THAT BILL I SAID THAT THIS WOULD ENABLE THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE TO ANALYSE AND GRADE THE OFFENCES WITH APPROPRIATE MAXIMUM PENALTIES DEPENDING ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF A BREACH OF EACH PARTICULAR REGULATION,+ HE NOTED.

MR HENDERSON SAID THERE ARE 19 SETS OF SAFETY REGULATIONS MADE UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE, AND AS A RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS BY THE INSPECTORATE, HE HAD RAISED THE PENALTIES IN FIVE SETS WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MOST URGENTLY IN NEED OF AMENDMENT.

THE REVIEW OF THE NEXT SIX SETS OF REGULATIONS IS BEING FINALISED NOW AND HE PROPOSED TO AMEND THE REMAINING ONES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IN THE FIVE SETS OF AMENDMENT REGULATIONS, ONLY THOSE OFFENCES WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE MOST SERIOUS, SUCH AS FAILURE BY A PROPRIETOR TO FENCE A WORKPLACE TO PREVENT WORKERS FROM FALLING FROM A HEIGHT AND THE GIVING OF FALSE PARTICULARS IN A REPORT, WILL ATTRACT THE MAXIMUM FINE OF \$50 000.

FOR SERIOUS OFFENCES SUCH AS FAILURE TO GUARD A MACHINE, THE MAXIMUM FINE WILL BE \$30 000. OTHER LESS SERIOUS OFFENCES WILL ATTRACT MAXIMUM FINES RANGING FROM \$5 000 TO \$20 000.

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#### SUMMONSES PROCEDURES STREAMLINED

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THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981 WHICH DEALS WITH THE PROCEDURE BY WHICH SUMMONSES ARE ISSUED BY MAGISTRATES COURTS WENT THROUGH ITS THREE READINGS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING ON THE BILL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE HON JOHN GRIFFITHS SAID IT PROVIDES FOR THE ISSUE OF SUMMONSES BY OFFICERS OF MAGISTRATES COURTS WHO ARE AUTHORISED IN WRITING BY MAGISTRATES.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID ABOUT 10 000 SUMMONSES ARE ISSUED EVERY WEEK AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE 40 MAGISTRATES TO PERSONALLY CONSIDER, APPROVE AND ISSUE EACH OF THEM. IN PRACTICE, THEREFORE, THE WORK HAD BEEN ATTENDED TO BY JUDICIAL CLERICAL STAFF UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF MAGISTRATES.

HE SAID THAT IN PRACTICE THE ISSUE OF SUMMONSES BY NON-PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN MAGISTRACIES HAS WORKED WELL AND PROPOSED THAT THIS PRACTICE SHOULD BE REGULARISED AND CONTINUED.

HOWEVER, MR GRIFFITHS CONSIDERED IT APPROPRIATE THAT CERTAIN SAFEGUARDS BE INTRODUCED:

- \* THAT PRIVATE COMPLAINTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS WILL CONTINUE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY AND PERSONALLY CONSIDERED BY MAGISTRATES-
- \* THAT MAGISTRATES SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO CANCEL SUMMONSES SO THAT IF IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT A SUMMONS HAS BEEN WRONGLY ISSUED AGAINST A DEFENDANT HE IS NOT SUBJECTED TO THE INCONVENIENCE OF UNNECESSARILY ATTENDING A COURT- AND
- \* THAT WHERE A SUMMONS IS CANCELLED AND THE PERSON SUMMONSED HAD ALREADY INCURRED COSTS A MAGISTRATE MAY IN APPROPRIATE CASES REIMBURSE HIM UP TO A LIMIT OF \$5 000.

MR GRIFFITHS SAID THE BILL RETAINS THE MAGISTRATES' POWER TO REFUSE TO ISSUE A SUMMONS UPON OFFICIAL COMPLAINT OR INFORMATION, I.E. UPON APPLICATION BY THE POLICE OR PUBLIC OFFICERS.

+THE BILL IN FACT REPRESENTS NO CHANGE FROM WHAT IS THE CURRENT PRACTICE- IT MERELY MAKES WATERTIGHT A LEGAL LOOPHOLE,+ HE SAID.

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BILL TO GIVE LEGCO POWER TO RAISE FINES

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A BILL SEEKING TO INTRODUCE A SIMPLER AND MORE EXPEDITIOUS MEANS TO MAINTAIN THE PUNITIVE AND DETERRENT EFFECTS OF STATUTORY PENALTIES WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT)(NO 2) BILL, THE LAW DRAFTSMAN THE HON GERALD NAZARETH SAID THE BILL, WHEN PASSED, WILL EMPOWER THE COUNCIL TO REVISE THE FINES FOR STATUTORY OFFENCES BY RESOLUTION INSTEAD OF AN AMENDMENT BILL.

MR NAZARETH EXPLAINED THERE WAS A CONSTANT NEED TO INCREASE THE LEVELS OF STATUTORY FINES BECAUSE OF INFLATION AND CONTINUAL CHANGES IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OFFENCES.

THE BILL WOULD ALSO RAISE THE CEILING OF FINES THAT MAY GENERALLY BE IMPOSED BY SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION FROM \$2 000 TO \$5 000, HE ADDED.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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OFFENDING MOTORISTS TO PAY MORE

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CHARGES ARE TO BE INCREASED FOR THE IMPOUNDING, REMOVAL AND STORAGE OF VEHICLES WHICH HAVE BEEN ILLEGALLY PARKED ON RESTRICTED ROADS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

THIS WAS SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, THE HON DONALD LIAO, WHEN INTRODUCING THE HOUSING (TRAFFIC) (AMENDMENT) BY-LAWS, 1981.

FROM MAY 1 THE IMPOUNDING CHARGE IS TO BE INCREASED FROM \$20 TO \$50, THE TOWAWAY CHARGE FROM \$80 TO \$110 AND THE STORAGE CHARGE FROM \$20 TO \$35 A DAY.

MR LIAO SAID THAT THE CURRENT CHARGES WERE TOO LOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DETERRENT.

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NEW POWERS FOR KCR GENERAL MANAGER  
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A BILL WHICH SEEKS TO PROVIDE THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY WITH THE ADDITIONAL POWERS REQUIRED FOR THE OPERATION OF A THROUGH PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, IF PASSED, WILL ALSO VALIDATE PREVIOUS ACTIONS OF THE GENERAL MANAGER IN THIS RESPECT.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, THE HON DEREK JONES SAID THAT THE BILL WOULD GIVE THE KCR GENERAL MANAGER THE AUTHORITY TO SETTLE DETAILS REGARDING THE OPERATION OF THE THROUGH TRAIN SERVICE, SUBJECT TO ANY DIRECTIONS BY THE GOVERNOR.

THE GENERAL MANAGER WOULD ALSO BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE REGULATIONS FOR AREAS OF THE RAILWAY TO BE DECLARED RESTRICTED AREAS, FOR THE ISSUE OF PERMITS FOR ACCESS TO SUCH AREAS, AND FOR THE MAKING AND ADMISSIBILITY IN COURT OF PLANS DELINEATING THEM.

+THESE PROVISIONS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE MADE FOR THE AIRPORT, AND ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO CONTROL ACCESS TO THOSE PARTS OF THE RAILWAY WHICH ARE USED FOR CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION PURPOSES,+ HE ADDED.

THROUGH PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICES TO AND FROM CANTON RESUMED IN APRIL 1979 BY AGREEMENT WITH THE GUANGZHOU RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION AND A SECOND DAILY SERVICE HAS BEEN OPERATED SINCE FEBRUARY 1980.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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LIMIT ON NUMBER OF PLB'S TO REMAIN  
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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY) EXTENDED UNTIL APRIL 10, 1982 THE PERIOD FOR WHICH THERE REMAINS A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES WHICH MAY BE LICENSED AS PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES.

IN MOVING THE ROAD TRAFFIC ORDINANCE (CHAPTER 220), THE SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT THE HON DEREK JONES SAID THE TOTAL PERMISSIBLE NUMBER OF PUBLIC LIGHT BUSES TO REMAIN AT 4 350 WAS ORDERED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 8 LAST YEAR.

MR JONES SAID UNDER A SECTION OF THE ORDINANCE THE LIMIT REMAINED IN FORCE UNTIL APRIL 10, 1981 WHEN IT COULD BE EXTENDED BY THE COUNCIL BY RESOLUTION.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1981

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REPORT ON DRAFT ESTIMATES

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THE REPORT BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFT ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1981-82 WAS PRESENTED AT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

TABLING THE REPORT, THE HON THE CHIEF SECRETARY SIR JACK CATER THANKED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE VERY CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT THEY HAD DEVOTED TO THE SCRUTINY OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.

THE DRAFT WAS REFERRED TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 25 THIS YEAR AND THE REPORT WAS COMPILED AFTER A SERIES OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETINGS.

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THREE BILLS PASSED

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THREE BILLS WERE PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

THEY ARE THE DEPOSIT-TAKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, THE MAGISTRATES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1981, AND THE SOCIETY OF BOY'S CENTRES INCORPORATION BILL 1981.

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JOGGERS TO HELP LAUNCH ANTI-NARCOTICS DRIVE

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A MASS JOGGING EVENT AND A FUN FAIR FOR THOSE LESS ATHLETICALLY INCLINED WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY, MAY 3, TO LAUNCH THE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST NARCOTICS' EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY PROGRAMMES FOR THE YEAR.

GIVEN THE TITLE 'LIVELY DRAGON JOG,' THE EVENT IS EXPECTED TO DRAW MORE THAN 2 500 JOGGERS OVER THE AGE OF 15 WHO MAY ENTER EITHER AS INDIVIDUALS OR IN GROUPS OF 20 OR MORE. IT WILL START AT 1 PM.

JOGGERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE TWO LAPS OF A ROUTE COVERING A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 6 500 METRES, STARTING FROM INVERNESS ROAD, AND GOING ALONG NGA TSIN WAI ROAD, LA SALLE ROAD, HEREFORD ROAD, RENFREW ROAD, JUNCTION ROAD, DUMBARTON ROAD AND RETURNING TO INVERNESS ROAD.

JOGGERS COMPLETING THE COURSE WILL BE AWARDED EITHER AN INDIVIDUAL 'JOGGER'S BADGE' OR A 'GROUP TROPHY'.

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FOR OTHERS WISHING TO ATTEND THE EVENT, THERE WILL BE A FUN FAIR AND GAMES TO BE HELD AT THE KOWLOON TSAI PARK STADIUM, AS WELL AS 'TELEMATCH GAME' IN WHICH TELEVISION ARTISTS, DISCO-JOCKEYS AND FOOTBALL STARS WILL COMPETE.

THE PIPES AND DRUMS OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE FORCE WILL PROVIDE THE MUSIC.

IT WILL BE THE BIGGEST ANTI-NARCOTICS PUBLICITY EVENT ORGANISED BY ACAN THIS YEAR, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE RECREATION AND SPORT SERVICE.

THE EVENT IS AIMED AT DRAWING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAUSE AND PROMOTING HEALTHY ACTIVITIES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, A SPOKESMAN SAID.

ENTRY FORMS FOR THE 'LIVELY DRAGON JOG' MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE RECREATION AND SPORT SERVICE HEADQUARTERS AND ITS BRANCH OFFICES, CITY DISTRICT OFFICES AND DISTRICT OFFICES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE ON APRIL 24.

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#### CHILDREN'S CHOIR IN TUEN MUN

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TUEN MUN IS TO HAVE ITS OWN CHILDREN'S CHOIR SOON.

LAST DECEMBER THE DISTRICT BOARD ENDORSED THE IDEA OF A CHOIR AS A WAY OF PROMOTING MUSIC AND PROVIDING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGSTERS IN THE FAST-DEVELOPING NEW TOWN.

AN ORGANISING COMMITTEE HAS ALREADY BEEN SET UP WHICH INCLUDE RURAL COMMITTEE LEADERS, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, COMMUNITY WORKERS AND DISTRICT OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES. THREE WELL-KNOWN LOCAL MUSICIANS, MR HUANG YAU-TAI, MR LIM SHING-YUNG AND MR WEI HON-CHEUNG, HAVE BEEN APPOINTED CHOIRMASTERS.

A DRIVE IS NOW ON TO RECRUIT 100 LOCAL CHILDREN FOR THE CHOIR. ALL THOSE AGED FROM SEVEN TO 15 ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY. THEY WILL BE REQUIRED TO PASS A VOCAL TEST ARRANGED BY THE CHOIR'S CONDUCTOR, MR AU PUN-YIN.

APPLICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE FROM TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE, TAI HING PUBLIC ENQUIRY SERVICE CENTRE, TAI HING COMMUNITY HALL, THE ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOL AND HOH FUK TONG PRIMARY SCHOOL.

TRAINING SESSIONS WILL START NEXT MONTH ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AT HOH FUK TONG PRIMARY SCHOOL. THE CHOIR WILL GIVE AN INAUGURAL CONCERT DURING THE TUEN MUN FESTIVAL IN NOVEMBER.

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